

Message Text

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SUBJECT: THE HAMILTON BY-ELECTION

THE CRUCIAL HAMILTON BY-ELECTION WILL BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY,
MAY 31. THIS BREAK IN THE TRADITION OF HOLDING ELECTIONS ON
THURSDAY IS DUE TO THE FACT THAT THE WORLD FOOTBALL CUP IN
WHICH SCOTLAND WILL PARTICIPATE BEGINS THE FOLLOWING DAY.

A MONTH AGO THE SNP CANDIDATE, MARGO MCDONALD, WAS CONSIDERED
BY LEADERS OF ALL PARTIES TO BE CERTAIN OF VICTORY. AFTER
LAST WEEK'S REGIONAL ELECTIONS AND SHOW OF STRENGTH BY LABOUR,
THE BOOKMAKERS HAVE THE LABOUR CANDIDATE, GEORGE ROBERTSON,
ODDS ON FAVORITE TO WIN. LADBROKES ARE OFFERING 2-5 ON LABOUR
AND 7-4 AGAINST THE SNP. THE LIBERALS, LIKE THE TORIES,
ARE 50-1 AGAINST.

MR. ROBERTSON, (32), IS THE FORMER CHAIRMAN OF THE SCOTTISH
COUNCIL OF THE LABOUR PARTY, A MEMBER OF THE SCOTTISH DEVELOPMENT
AGENCY AND FULL-TIME OFFICIAL OF THE GENERAL AND MUNICIPAL
WORKERS' UNION, IS MARRIED WITH TWO CHILDREN.

MR. FRED MCDERMID, 54 A HAMILTON SURVEYOR, IS THE LIBERAL
PARTY' S CANDIDATE. IN HIS PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS FOR OFFICE, HE
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HAS LOST HIS DEPOSIT. THE CHANCES ARE HE WILL LOSE IT AGAIN
IN THIS ELECTION, YET, IF ALL THINGS WERE EQUAL AND SHOMEHOW
THE LIBERALS BUILTS ON THE 1559 VOTES THEY RECEIVED IN OCTOBER,
1974, IT WOULD HAVE A VITAL BEARING ON A CONTEST WHERE SNP
REQUIRE ONLY A 4.4 PERCENT SWING TO RECAPTURE THE SEAT FROM LABOUR.

MRS. MCDONALD, A FORMER MP IS ONE OF THE BEST KNOWN PERSONALITIES

IN THE SNP. THE SCOTTISH LABOUR PARTY WILL NOT BE FIGHTING THE ELECTION.

THE LATEST SYSTEM THREE POLL INDICATES A REMARKABLE 23 PERCENT LEAD IN SCOTLAND FOR LABOUR. THE POLL INDICATED THE FOLLOWING:

	NOW	APRIL 1978	MARCH 1978	OCTOBER 1974.
CON	24 PERCENT	29 PERCENT	30 PERCENT	25 PERCENT
LAB	47 PERCENT	38 PERCENT	35 PERCENT	36 PERCENT
SNP	24 PERCENT	27 PERCENT	27 PERCENT	30 PERCENT
LIB	3 PERCENT	4 PERCENT	5 PERCENT	8 PERCENT
SLP	2 PERCENT	2 PERCENT	2 PERCENT	-

DURING A VISIT TO THE MAJOR CITIES OF SCOTLAND THIS WEEK, POLITICIANS FROM ALL PARTIES FEEL THAT LABOUR MAY WELL WIN THE HAMILTON BY-ELECTION. MY EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN THAT LOCAL POLITICIANS ARE WRONG AS OFTEN AS THEY ARE RIGHT IN FORECASTING ELECTIONS.

THE POST'S JUDGEMENT IS THAT THE SNP CANDIDATE, MARGO MCDONALD, MAY STILL WIN THE ELECTION. SHE IS BY FAR THE MOST ACTIVE, ENERGETIC CAMPAIGNER OF THE LOT. SHE HAS THE CHARISMA THAT IS SO LACKING AMONG THE CANDIDATES. FURTHER, THE SNP REALIZES THAT IT HAS TO MAKE A STRONG SHOWING IN ORDER TO ATTEMPT TO HALT THE APPARENT DECLINE IN THEIR SUPPORT.

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IT JUST SO HAPPENS THAT THE SNP'S ANNUAL CONVENTION WILL BE HELD IN EDINBURGH ON MAY 25-27. THIS IS CLOSE ENOUGH FOR THE PARTY TO SEND BUS LOADS OF SUPPORTERS OVER TO HAMILTON TO FIRE UP THE LOCAL CADRE. IF THE SNP GET THEMSELVES PSYCHED UP ENOUGH, AT THEIR CONVENTION, THEY MIGHT WELL BRING OFF AN SNP VICTORY. IN ANY CASE, IT SHOULD BE A CLOSE ELECTION.DOBBS

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